

# Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage

AMERICA DEPENDS ON THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

For over 55 years, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) investments have protected parks and natural areas, and funded the development of playgrounds, sports fields, bike paths and hiking trails. This network of public lands provides the foundation of America's strong outdoor recreation economy.

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, paddling and other outdoor recreation activities contribute a total of \$778 billion annually to the economy and support 5.2 million American jobs. This sector accounts for 2.2% of U.S. GDP. Each year, our federal public lands contribute nearly \$60 billion to the American economy and support more than 400,000 jobs. According to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, America's hunters, anglers, and target shooters contribute \$119 billion annually to the U.S. economy and support 1.6 million jobs.

The outdoor industry is one of the most healthy sectors of our economy, even in difficult times. From 2005 to 2011, when the Great Recession saw most economic sectors and employment contract, the outdoor recreation sector grew at a rate of 5 percent each year.



LWCF protects federal lands that are key to local recreation and tourism industries, and visitors to these areas spend money on food, lodging and equipment:

- The National Park Service estimates over 318 million annual visitors spend over \$20 billion each year in local communities adjacent to national park sites, supporting nearly 330,000 jobs, and over \$40 billion in total economic output each year nationwide.
- Spending at our National Wildlife Refuges generates \$3.2 billion each year and more than 40,000 jobs.
- Our National Forest system generates \$9.5 billion for local and state economies.
- Outdoor recreation on Bureau of Land Management lands support 47,000 jobs and add \$6.8 billion to the American economy.

The LWCF State and Local Assistance program has invested more than \$4.4 billion to support state, local, and regional parks in every state and nearly every county in the U.S. These parks see 800 million annual visitors and employ 18,500 full-time staff and 51,000 total personnel, including part-time and seasonal workers.

- Local park and recreation agencies generated \$154 billion in economic activity in 2015, nearly \$81 billion in value added and more than 1.1 million jobs - boosting labor income by \$55 billion.
- Capital spending by local park and recreation agencies, to build and enhance local parks and trails, generates an additional \$64 billion in economic activity and supports nearly 378,000 jobs annually.



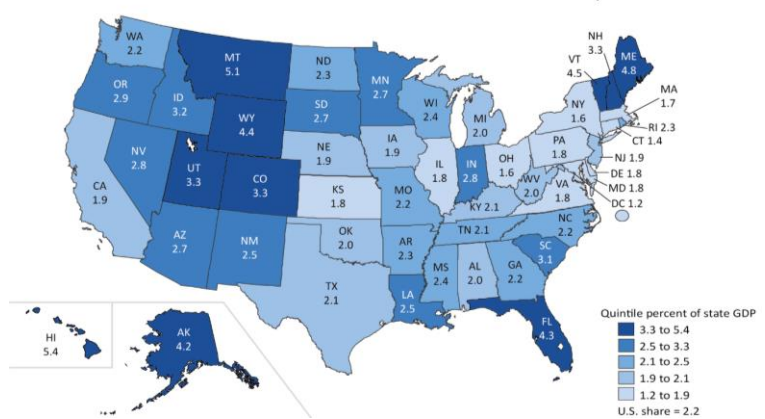


LWCF's Forest Legacy Program (FLP), keeps mills in operation, jobs in the woods, and capital in rural communities. Working forests support more than 2.4 million jobs and contribute \$115 billion towards the GDP.

- Since 1990, the FLP has helped conserve over 1.2 million acres of forest and employed over 2,500 workers in the recreation, timber, and syrup industries generating over \$495 million in economic output in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York.

LWCF also helps landowners and local banks recover from economic challenges. For many farmers, ranchers and timberland owners, land is their biggest source of equity. In tough economic times, many landowners are facing the loss of their properties through foreclosure. Working with federal and state land management agencies, LWCF provides landowners with another option to preserve their equity and keep iconic working landscapes intact.

Outdoor Recreation Value Added: Percent of State GDP, 2017



LWCF acquisitions help our national, state, and local parks, forests, wildlife areas, and other public lands provide clean drinking water, disaster risk reduction, point and nonpoint source remediation, coastal resiliency, carbon sequestration, and public land improvements, typically at a significant cost savings versus gray infrastructure investments.

- LWCF investments in forested land, captures and cleans safe fresh drinking water for tens of millions of Americans.
- Conservation of coastal wetlands, barrier islands, floodplains, and other ecosystem features provide natural flood protection and coastal resilience, often at a far lower cost than seawalls, levees, and other flood control structures.

[www.lwcfcoalition.org](http://www.lwcfcoalition.org)

Even while supporting all these economic benefits, LWCF is not funded by taxpayer dollars. To keep pace with intense development pressures and growth that threaten the few remaining open spaces we have left in this country, the LWCF Act of 1965 made a commitment to the American public that a small portion of revenues from offshore drilling paid by oil companies would go to conservation and outdoor recreation programs. LWCF funding is crucial to maintaining public access and close-to home recreation for all Americans.